

NCA  
VOC FOR PGM/FN  
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-6327  
WAYNE COREY/HONG KONG

DECEMBER 14, 1978

# CHINA-VIETNAM

ANNCR:

CHINA HAS NOW ISSUED SEVERAL IMPORTANT WARNINGS TO VIETNAM THAT IT IS REACHING THE LIMIT OF ITS RESTRAINT FOLLOWING CONTINUED BORDER INCIDENTS. THE WARNINGS HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE IN CONNECTION WITH VIETNAM'S ACTIONS AGAINST CAMBODIA. WAYNE COREY IN HONGKONG SENT THIS BACKGROUND REPORT.

VOICE:

IT'S NOW CLEAR THAT CHINA IS DELIBERATELY AIMING SOME SIGNIFICANT WARNINGS AT VIETNAM WHICH GO CONSIDERABLY BEYOND ROUTINE DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS OR COMPLAINTS IN THE CHINESE PRESS. THE PRO-PEKING HONGKONG NEWSPAPER TA KUNG PAO HAS GIVEN PROMINENT FRONT-PAGE ATTENTION TO COMMENTS MADE BY CHINESE VICE PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN. HE SAID ON WEDNESDAY THAT CHINA'S RESTRAINT IS LIMITED AND THAT THE VIETNAMESE SHOULD NOT THINK CHINA IS WEAK AND CAN BE BULLIED.

THESE WORDS WERE BROADCAST ON RADIO PEKINGS'S VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE SERVICE TO VIETNAM.

THE REMARKS WERE MADE JUST BEFORE A STRONGLY WORDED CHINESE DIPLOMATIC NOTE WAS GIVEN TO VIETNAM. IT PROTESTED A SERIES OF BORDER INCIDENTS ON LAND AND AT SEA IN WHICH PEKING SAID SEVERAL CHINESE WERE KILLED OR WOUNDED. THE NOTE ALSO MENTIONED CHINA'S LIMITED RESTRAINT AND ADDED THAT OBVIOUSLY, VIETNAMESE PROVOCATIONS ALONG THE BORDER WITH CHINA WERE CONNECTED TO WHAT IT CALLED VIETNAM'S MASSIVE AGGRESSION AGAINST CAMBODIA.

THE MORE OMINOUS TONE OF CHINESE WARNINGS TO VIETNAM WAS FIRST EVIDENT IN A SPEECH BY A CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY OFFICIAL EARLIER IN THE WEEK ON THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF

THE KWANG SI CHUANG AUTONOMOUS REGION. ACCORDING TO THE PRO-COMMUNIST HONGKONG NEWSPAPER, THE COMMUNIST PARTY OFFICIAL, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE SINO-VIETNAMESE DISPUTE, QUOTED THE LATE CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG'S STATEMENT THAT, "WE WILL NOT ATTACK IF WE ARE NOT ATTACKED. BUT IF WE ARE ATTACKED, WE WILL CERTAINLY COUNTERATTACK." THE NEWSPAPER SAID VIETNAM SHOULD PAY ATTENTION TO THIS.

PEKING'S WARNINGS TO VIETNAM HAVE FOLLOWED HANOI'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FORMATION OF ACAMBODIAN REBEL GROUP WHICH SAID IT INTENDS TO OVERTHROW THE CHINESE-BACKED CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT IN PHNOMPENH. ANALYSTS HERE IN HONGKONG SAY THAT WHAT CHINA IS NOW TELLING VIETNAM IS SIMILAR TO WHAT PEKING TOLD NEW DELHI, JUST BEFORE CHINESE AND INDIAN TROOPS FOUGHT A BRIEF BORDER WAR IN THE EARLY NINETEEN SIXTIES. BUT THE ANALYSTS ADD THAT IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO PREDICT CHINA'S RESPONSE AS ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS SOUTHERN COMMUNIST NEIGHBOR, VIETNAM, CONTINUE TO WORSEN.

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